

Hive Mind: How Your Nation's IQ Matters So Much More Than Your Own

By Garrett Jones

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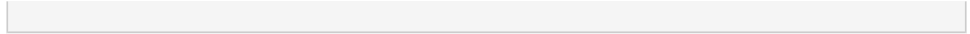
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Hive Mind: How Your Nation's IQ Matters So Much More Than Your Own By Garrett Jones

Over the last few decades, economists and psychologists have quietly documented the many ways in which a person's IQ matters. But, research suggests that a nation's IQ matters so much more. As Garrett Jones argues in *Hive Mind*, modest differences in national IQ can explain most cross-country inequalities. Whereas IQ scores do a moderately good job of predicting individual wages, information processing power, and brain size, a country's average score is a much stronger bellwether of its overall prosperity. Drawing on an expansive array of research from psychology, economics, management, and political science, Jones argues that intelligence and cognitive skill are significantly more important on a national level than on an individual one because they have "positive spillovers." On average, people who do better on standardized tests are more patient, more cooperative, and have better memories. As a result, these qualities—and others necessary to take on the complexity of a modern economy?become more prevalent in a society as national test scores rise. What's more, when we are surrounded by slightly more patient, informed, and cooperative neighbors we take on these qualities a bit more ourselves. In other words, the worker bees in every nation create a "hive mind" with a power all its own. Once the hive is established, each individual has only a tiny impact on his or her own life. Jones makes the case that, through better nutrition and schooling, we can raise IQ, thereby fostering higher savings rates, more productive teams, and more effective bureaucracies. After demonstrating how test scores that matter little for individuals can mean a world of difference for nations, the book leaves readers with policy-oriented conclusions and hopeful speculation: Whether we lift up the bottom through changing the nature of work, institutional improvements, or freer immigration, it is possible that this period of massive global inequality will be a short season by the standards of human history if we raise our global IQ.

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Editorial Review

Review

"As someone who is routinely baffled by the prolixity of economics texts, I found it hugely refreshing to read Jones's clear, engaging prose . . . [*Hive Mind*] is enormously more accessible and enjoyable than previous books on national IQ differences." (Stuart J. Ritchie)

"For over 100 years, we've neglected the importance of national differences in our cognitive progress; this book is a welcome antidote and an eye opener." (James R. Flynn *University of Otago*)

"Garrett Jones' *Hive Mind* is the very best introduction to a simple truth: The smarts of the people around you are way more important than you think. Much of our world is shaped by this fact, which no one has talked about?until now." (Tyler Cowen, Professor of Economics)

"Those of us who live in the world's richest countries like to believe that it is our own intellect and ingenuity that accounts for our success. But what if our own intelligence matters less than the average skill of the country in which we live? *Hive Mind* offers a bracing account of why some countries are so rich while others are so poor, and how we might foster more cooperative and, ultimately, more prosperous societies." (Reihan Salam *Executive Editor, National Review*)

"Whereas individuals' IQs are less strongly related to their performance, the relationship between national averages of IQ and performance indicators such as gross domestic product is robust. But, the beneficial indicators are not limited to economic statistics; they include better public health, higher levels of education and skills, patience, prudence and a willingness to save for the future Jones concludes his book with the challenge to discover underlying factors that enhance a wide range of cognitive skills. RECOMMENDED." (E.L. Whalen *CHOICE*)

"On balance this is a notable text?perhaps 2016's most important economics book, both for the development specialist and the general reader." (Fred Thompson *Governance*)

About the Author

Garrett Jones is Associate Professor of Economics at the Center for Study of Public Choice, George Mason University. Garrett's research and commentary have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Forbes*, and *Businessweek*.

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